

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Responsive to the Office Action, Applicants have canceled Claims 1 through 9, have amended Claim 10 to clearly distinguish over the prior art and present herewith claims indicated to be allowable in independent form as new Claims 13 through 15.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowability of Claims 5, 9 and 12. Accordingly, Applicants present with this amendment new Claim 13 which includes the recitation of original Claims 1, 3 and 5, new Claim 14 which includes the recitation of original Claims 6, 8 and 9 and new Claim 15 which includes the recitation of original Claims 10 and 12. Claims 13 through 15 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 10 through 12 remain in the application with Claim 10 being amended to more clearly recite the overall combination of features in a sectional upward acting door for a vehicle cargo body wherein plural planar panel members are interconnected by at least three adjacent hinge assemblies, the hinge assemblies each including opposed hinge members with hinge pin receiving bores formed therein, respectively. The hinge members of each hinge assembly are interconnected by a combination hinge pin and reinforcing member for the door and the hinge pin, comprising a cylindrical rod, is retained in assembly with the respective hinge assemblies by collars secured to the pin member at opposite ends thereof. This uncomplicated and unique combination of elements in a sectional door is

believed to patentably distinguish over the prior art of record in this application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by the disclosure of U.S. Patent 6,463,988B1 to Mullet et al. The Mullet et al. patent discloses a sectional garage door or the like wherein generally planar panels are interconnected by hinge members which include respective cooperating knuckles 59 and 62 forming a hinge connection between adjacent door panels. In certain embodiments of the sectional door disclosed in the Mullet et al. patent, an elongated tension rod (225, 225' or 326) is provided which extends through the hinge knuckles and is connected at its opposite ends to end connector members, respectively. The tension rods (225, 225' and 326) do not serve as hinge pins but merely become tensioned to minimize deflection of the door of Mullet et al. due to windloads, etc. In fact, Mullet et al. suggests that the tension rods may also be cables. Accordingly, Mullet et al. does not disclose or suggest the provision of a combination hinge pin and reinforcing rod arrangement as set forth in Claim 10 and the claims dependent thereon, respectively.

Claim 10 has been amended to clearly recite that the elongated pin member, forming a hinge pin for each of adjacent hinge assemblies, comprises a generally cylindrical rod extending within the bores formed in and engaged with each of the hinge members of each of the hinge assemblies, and extends between adjacent hinge assemblies to provide a reinforcing

Appl. Ser. No. 10/620,983
Amendment Dated October 27, 2004
Reply to Office Action of August 2, 2004

member for resisting lateral deflection of the panel members of the door. Accordingly, Claim 10 is directed to a novel combination wherein the hinge assemblies of the door of Claim 10 include a single pin member, forming a hinge pin for three or more adjacent hinge assemblies and also forming a reinforcing member to resist lateral deflection of the panel members which are interconnected by the hinge assemblies. Claim 10 and the claims dependent thereon are believed to distinguish patentably over the Mullet et al. reference as well as the other art of record. Reconsideration for allowance of Claims 10 through 12 is respectfully requested.

Applicants have made a diligent effort to advance the prosecution of this application by canceling claims, by presenting allowable claims in proper form for allowance and by pointing out with particularity herein how the claims now presented distinguish in a patentable sense. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance of Claims 10 through 15 is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

10/27/04

Michael E. Martin

Michael E. Martin
Registration No. 24,821
Agent for Applicants

Gardere Wynne Sewell LLP
1601 Elm Street, Suite 3000
Dallas, Texas 75201-4761
Phone (214) 999-3000
Fax (214) 999-3623